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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2835
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0255
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RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0072
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0440
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0556
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ULAANBAATAR 000032

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STATE DEPT FOR EAP/CM AND INR/EAP

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [ECON](#) [MG](#)

SUBJECT: MRPR CABINET MINISTERS REQUIRED TO SIGN ETHICS AGREEMENT

Classified By: Ambassador Mark C. Minton for Reason 1.4 (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: With Parliamentary elections scheduled for June and public concern running high over corruption, the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) has announced that all MPRP Cabinet and Vice Ministers signed an ethics agreement on January 17. The agreement obliges signatories to reject corruption, promote accountability and respect human rights. It also obliges them to obey all Mongolian laws, avoid coming under the influence of any special interest group, and speak out immediately against unethical behavior by others in Government. Theoretically, at least, signatories could lose their party membership for failing to honor the agreement. MPRP Parliamentarians have not been required to sign the agreement. Some observers mocked the agreement and pointed out that corruption among senior MPRP officials has long been a problem. Others called it an election-year ploy, while still others considered the measure a step toward accountability. We welcome the agreement and any other efforts to underline the need for ethical behavior by public servants. In recent years, legislation on ethical standards for high-ranking state officials has languished at the State Structure Standing Committee, and has never made it to the Parliamentary floor for a vote. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly difficult for corrupt Mongolian officials to hide or defend their actions. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶2. (C) With Parliamentary elections five months away and public concern running high over corruption, the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) has produced an ethics agreement, which all MPRP Cabinet ministers and vice ministers signed on January 17. Notably, MPRP Parliamentarians were not been required to sign the agreement, which obliges signatories to reject corruption, promote accountability and respect human rights. The measure provides for the ouster of any MPRP member found by the party's Ethics Council to have failed to honor its terms. The agreement, conceived last autumn at the party's 25th Congress and drafted by the MPRP Steering Committee, also calls on signatories to uphold the Constitution; obey all Mongolian laws; avoid coming under the influence of any

special interest group; serve transparently and justly; and speak out immediately against unethical behavior by others in Government.

"ISN'T THAT AN OXYMORON?"

13. (C) Some cynics mocked the agreement; one asked: "MPRP ethics agreement? Isn't that an oxymoron?" Others called it shameless electioneering, and said it was just a matter of time before other parties followed suit, to avoid being viewed as less ethical than other parties. However, other observers considered the measure a step in the right direction, though they wondered aloud whether the MPRP would actually banish an MPRP Cabinet or vice minister caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

ETHICS LEGISLATION LANGUISHING

14. (C) Legislation on ethical standards for high-ranking state officials has in recent years stalled at the Parliamentary Standing Committee for State Structure. While the legislation has been debated there, it has never made it to the Parliamentary floor for a vote, much to the frustration of advocates. The legislation, if enacted, would work against incumbents seeking re-election by, for instance, forbidding them to use state property such as telephones, vehicles, computers and photocopiers for any non-official use, such as campaigning. As one advocate put it: MPs "don't want to pass the legislation, because right now there are freer to do what they want, without much scrutiny."

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COMMENT

15. (C) Regardless of what strategic or other needs are met by the MPRP's announced ethics agreement, we support the measure and any other efforts to crystallize in the public mind the need for ethical behavior by public officials. Corruption remains an entrenched problem in Mongolia, particularly among the police and judiciary. But with the ethics agreement, and more importantly the operation of the Anti Corruption Agency (formed by the July 2006 Anti Corruption Law, which also forced public servants to declare their assets and income for the first time), it is becoming increasingly difficult for corrupt Mongolian officials to hide or defend their actions.
END COMMENT.
MINTON